



South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
South Dakota Department of the Military



CARVE OUT TIME FOR OUR VETERANS

Every holiday season I seem to over indulge in the pies, cookies, candies, and anything sweet. It just seems to be part of the holidays! Even if my resolution is to lose fifteen pounds, when the holidays roll around the resolution is forgotten and the foodie in me marches forward!

Every new year gives us an opportunity to make changes in our lives, make new resolutions, appreciate all the blessings we've been given, and add a new chapter in our book of life. There are new questions to be asked and new answers to be discovered about ourselves.

As we turn our calendars to 2018, please keep our veterans in your hearts. Include in your list of resolutions, a goal to reach out and support our veterans. Each month as you tear a leaf off your calendar, please ask yourself two questions – "Did I carve out time this month for veterans and what opportunities do I have next month to show them my appreciation?"

Veterans pledged their allegiance to our country by serving in the military and fighting for America's freedom. Whether it's a family member, friend or complete stranger; veterans need your support. I'm asking all of you to, each month, carve out time to support our veterans.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



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VABHHCS TO HOST VETERANS STAND DOWN AND TOWN HALL

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) will host a Veterans Stand Down and Town Hall on January 10, 2018, at Chadron State College. The Stand Down takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will be immediately followed by a Town Hall. The events will be held in the Student Center Ballroom and are open to all veterans and their families.

The focus of the Stand Down is to bring community and VA resources together to assist any veteran in need. Veterans will find helpful information and on-the-spot services. VABHHCS staff will offer housing and employment assistance. Veterans can ask questions and receive immediate assistance on VA benefits, special programs, legal assistance, and health care eligibility and enrollment. To help prepare for winter, personal items such as cold weather clothing, blankets, hygiene kits, and duffel bags will be available.

The Town Hall meeting is intended to provide an open forum for VA leaders to hear directly from beneficiaries. The meeting is part of an ongoing effort to regularly meet with veterans across the health care system.

"All Veterans and their families are encouraged to join us and bring questions or concerns about VA health care," said Sandra Horsman, VABHHCS Director. "We regularly hold Town Halls to learn about what is working well and ways we can improve our services."

Staff will be available throughout the day to respond to a range of questions including enrolling in VA health care available services.

JANUARY 16th

MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

All Military/Veterans will
receive 2 free tickets with ID

BHSU Basketball @ The Young Center
vs. South Dakota School of Mines & Technology



Women @ 5:30pm | Men @ 7:30pm

SFVAHCS ART SHOW

The Sioux Falls Veterans Affairs Health Care System is in search of veterans' & employees' artwork for the annual creative arts and crafts show January 23. Share your creativity and enter visual art, including woodworking, painting, leatherwork, needlework, paper crafts, sculpture and more.

Veterans who receive care from the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center or one of the CBOC's are eligible to participate and may submit up to two pieces that have been created within the last year. They request entries be submitted by January 12.

The art show will be open for public viewing on the 23rd from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM on second floor of Primary Care. Judges from the local community will name the winners, and a reception and awards ceremony will take place at 2:00 PM.

Veteran artists may also submit their art to the National Veterans Creative Arts competition, which will take place in Des Moines, IA this fall.

Employees who enter art will not compete against veterans for recognition and prizes.

Need more info or have questions, please contact Diane Larsen at Ext. 6418 or Shirley Redmond at Ext. 6889.



POTTER COUNTY RECOGNIZES WWII VETERANS

Potter County VSO Don Hericks had the distinct honor to recognize numerous Potter County World War II Veterans this week.

What a great opportunity this was for Veteran Sherman Rausch to receive his medal with his grandchildren present and for them to hear about his service to this great country.

Spencer Kimball once said, "I promise that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, children, grandchildren and others. Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us and as our posterity reads of our life's experiences, they too will come to know and love us."



VA TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS ON TIMELY PAYMENTS TO COMMUNITY PROVIDERS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a series of immediate actions to improve the timeliness of payments to community providers.

The actions will address the issue of delayed payments head-on and produce sustainable fixes that solve ongoing payment issues that affect veterans, community providers and other VA partners.

"It is vital to the health of our network of providers that we provide payment in a timely and consistent fashion," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Our outside providers are an essential part of our network and we need to improve our system of payments for their services."



The VA will immediately take the following short and long-term actions to improve payments to community providers. Short-term actions include:

- Publish a list identifying providers with high dollar value of unpaid claims, to be published the week of Jan. 8 at the following website: <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/>.
- Create rapid response teams to work on the ground with these providers to reach financial settlement within 90 days.
- Increase the number of claims processed by vendors by 300 percent in January 2018 and by 600 percent in April 2018 with a goal of 90 percent clean claims processed in less than 30 days.
- Establish multiple entry points for providers to check the status of their claim, including a dedicated customer service team and VA's Vendor Inquiry System (VIS) located at <https://www.vis.fsc.va.gov>.

In addition, long-term actions include:

- Deploy multiple IT improvements within the first six months of 2018 that streamline the claims submission and payment process to reduce time for payments significantly.
- Align on concurrent performance improvement goals with the VA's existing Third Party Administrators to improve multiple aspects of their performance rapidly to ensure veterans have continued uninterrupted access to care.
- Award four new contracts in 2018 for implementation in 2019 to establish the new Community Care Network that includes elements designed to ensure prompt payment of claims.
- Work with Congress to consolidate and simplify all the VA community care programs, including provisions for prompt payment of claims.
- Ensure transparency with the VA's claims processing performance by publishing VA's claims processing timeliness on a monthly basis.



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VA TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS ON TIMELY PAYMENTS TO COMMUNITY PROVIDERS (CONTINUED)

The VA's current Third Party Administrators, Health Net Federal Services and TriWest Healthcare Alliance are committed to working with the VA to improve the timeliness of payments to community providers. Health Net and TriWest manage the VA's community care networks and process payments to community providers.

"It is an honor and responsibility to serve the veteran community," said Billy Maynard, CEO of Health Net. "We remain committed to partnering with the VA to improve the claims payment process."

David McIntyre, president and CEO of TriWest said, "We could not be more pleased at the aggressive focus on this critical topic. We look forward to continuing to reach the industry- leading performance level we all desire and expect."

Improving timeliness of payments to community providers is a critical element in the VA's goal of building a community care program that is easy to understand, simple to administer and meets the needs of veterans and their families, community providers and VA staff.

Here are resources for community care providers:

<https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/resources.asp>.

Learn about the new community care network in this video:

<https://youtu.be/v45WAGdCaEc>.

Payments

2018 SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 93rd Session of the South Dakota Legislature will convene at approximately 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, with Governor Daugaard's State of the State Address. This year's session is scheduled for 38 legislative days, with the main run concluding March 9. March 26 is reserved for considering gubernatorial vetoes.



Legislative Research Council's website can be viewed at:

<http://sdlegislature.gov/>

Legislative bills can be viewed at:

http://sdlegislature.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Default.aspx?Session=2018

The legislative calendar can be found at:

<http://sdlegislature.gov/docs/legsession/2018/calendar.pdf>

Upcoming Events

2018

Jan 9—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—RedRossa in Pierre—9:00 am (CT)
Jan 10—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—RedRossa in Pierre—5:00—8:00 pm (CT)
Jan 16—Black Hills State University Military/Veterans Appreciation Night—Young Center—5:30 pm (MT)
Jan 17—SD American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8—Pierre—5:30 pm (CT)
Jan 17—Mobile Vet Centers—Spink County Courthouse—Redfield—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Jan 18—Mobile Vet Centers—Beadle County Courthouse—Huron—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Jan 28-29—VFW Legislative Conference—Ft. Pierre AmericInn
Jan 29—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Ft. Pierre—6:00 pm—7:30 pm (CT)
Feb 16-18 American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Feb 23-25 Vietnam Veterans & Era Reunion—Ramada Inn—Mitchell
Mar 4-8 National VFW Conference—Washington, DC
Apr 27-29—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish
Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls
Jul 14-17—DAV National Convention—Reno, NV
Jul 21-25—VFW National Convention—Kansas City, MO
Aug 20-24—SDDVA Benefits School—Ramkota—Pierre
Aug 20-24—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN



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